REMARKS

With regard to claim 11, the Examiner is of the opinion that Labana, by suggesting the adapting of a backplane such that the last card slot would connect to the first card slot, also suggests the adapting of a sequence of card slots to connect to a first card slot of an additional backplane. Applicants respectfully do not agree with that determination.

Labana discloses in paragraph 51 the following:

[0051] In some embodiments, the Protection Bus can form a ring. For example, in some embodiments, a right-most slot that would otherwise have naturally been a terminal slot (for example, because the wiring of the backplane determines that the Protection Processing Module will always occupy the left-most position in a Protection Group) is connected not only to its logically adjacent slot, but also to the left-most slot in the backplane via an extension of the protection bus and addition of other wiring that would cause the right-most slot to be adjacent as well as logically adjacent to the left-most slot. In such embodiments involving twenty slots, for example, a Processing Module in slot 18 might serve as the Protection Processing Module for a Protection Group occupying slots 18-20 and 1-3.

It is clear from the underlined parts of the above excerpt that Labana does not suggest connecting the last slot to a first slot of ***another*** backplane, but suggests connecting the last slot to the first slot in the backplane. In the absence of any other backplane, "the backplane" must be the same for the last slot and for the first slot. This is different from what is defined in claim 11, which clearly requires an "additional backplane".

If one would argue that by suggesting the connection of the last slot to the first slot on one backplane, Labana also gives a hint to connect the last slot in one backplane to a first slot in another backplane, then applicants also do not agree with this interpretation. Paragraph 51 referred

to by the Examiner contains a very strong teaching **away** from making any connection between two backplanes. In the first line of paragraph 51, it is explained that *"In some embodiments, the Protection Bus can form a ring"* and the text that follows in the remaining part of paragraph 51 is an illustration of how the ring can be formed. Because a ring is a closed structure (a loop), the solution in which the last slot in one backplane is connected to a first slot in another backplane does not form a ring. A person skilled in the art would not connect the last slot in one backplane to the first slot in another backplane, because this solution does not form a ring and forming the ring is what Labana teaches in paragraph 51.

Therefore, applicants respectfully submit that even if a person skilled in the art would combine the teachings of Poole and Labana, the resulting solution would still be different from the one defined in claim 11 and, in consequence, claim 11 is non-obvious.

With regard to claim 16, the Examiner is of the opinion that Labana in paragraph 63 shows controlling a safety function of a second card by a first card, and that the second card can detect the presence of a signal connection to the first card and ignore control signals at other contact(s). Applicants respectfully do not agree with that determination.

There is nothing about control in paragraph 63. Labana. discloses detection of a failure by means of a status line, but detection is not control. Detection is passive, and control is active. There is also nothing about ignoring control signals. If, however, the Examiner is trying to imply that a failed card ignores signals, because it ignores any signal due to its failure, applicants have amended claim 16 to clarify that the second card ignores control signals at the i-th contact <u>if the signal is detected at the j-th contact</u>. This feature is neither disclosed nor suggested by Labana.

Basis for this amendment can be found in the paragraph bridging pages 4 and 5 of the PCT publication. It is explained there how to prevent receiving control signals from a plurality of

cards, i.e., if one control signal is received (connection is detected), and then the other can be ignored.

In view of theses differences applicants believe that claim 16 is novel and inventive.

Petition is hereby made for a one-month extension of the period to respond to the outstanding Official Action to October 23, 2008. A check in the amount of $130.00, as the Petition fee, is enclosed herewith. If there are any additional charges, or any overpayment, in connection with the filing of this response, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any such deficiency, or credit any such overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 11-1145.

Wherefore, a favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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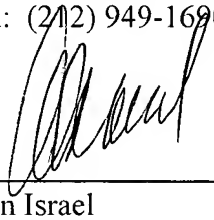

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